

# Treatment Adherence

# Strategy

## Do

- facilitate more detailed and explicit thought process in decision making
- Facilitate planned medication actions by client as opposed to impulsive
- Support whatever decision they make

# Strategy

Don't

- Attempt to make their decision for them
- Undermine your long term relationship by threatening, catastrophe, or twisting their arm

# Remind them that adhering to treatment helps to prevent relapse

- Ask them to describe what it felt like last time they were sick
- Which symptoms were the most distressing
- Which symptoms were the most disabling
- What did symptoms prevent them from doing

# Ask them to identify which medication relieved which symptom

- Start with their most distressing, disabling symptom ask which medication helped most
- Identify 2-3 symptoms for each medication
- Write out a copy of the list for them

# Talk about Missing Doses

- Acknowledge that taking a pill every day is a hassle.
- Acknowledge that everybody on medication misses taking it sometimes.
- Do not ask if they have missed any doses, rather ask, "how many doses have you missed?:"
- Ask if they felt or acted different on days when they missed their medication.
- Was missing the medication related to any substance use relapse?

# Identify the Mode of Missing a Dose

- Without judgment, ask *“Why did you miss the medication? Did you forget, or did you choose not to take it at that time?”*

- Don't accept "I just don't like pills."  
Tell them you're sure they wouldn't make such an important decision without having a reason.



# For Clients who Forgot, Ask Them to Consider the Following Strategies:

*Keep medication where it cannot be missed:* with the TV remote control, near the refrigerator, or taped to the handle of a toothbrush. Everyone has 2 or 3 things they do everyday without fail. Put the medication in a place where it cannot be avoided when doing that activity.

# For Clients who Forgot, Ask Them to Consider the Following Strategies:

*Suggest they use an alarm clock set for the time of day they should take their medication. Reset the alarm as needed.*

# For Clients who Forgot, Ask Them to Consider the Following Strategies:

Reduce the frequency of dosing as much as possible

- Most psychiatric medications can be taken once or twice a day
- Mid-day doses are frequently forgotten
- The more doses, the more opportunity for error

# For clients who admit to choosing NOT to take their medication

- Acknowledge they have a right to choose NOT to use any medication.
- Stress that they owe it to themselves to make sure their decision is well thought out. It is an important decision about their personal health.
- Ask their reason for choosing not to take the medication.

# Offer as examples reasons others might choose not to take medication.

For instance, they:

1. Don't believe they ever needed it; never were mentally ill
2. Don't believe they need it anymore; cured
3. Don't like the side effects
4. Fear the medication will harm them
5. Struggle with objections or ridicule of friends and family members
6. Feel taking medication means they are not personally in control

# If they don't believe they need it

- Treat their assertion as a researchable hypothesis
- Jointly review their written record with them
- For each exacerbation of symptoms identify if it was due to treatment non-adherence

# Working with Side Effects or Fear of Harm

- Clarify which medication they believe causes that effect
- Ask them to compare the distress or disability of the side effect to the symptoms untreated
- Clarify when they first noticed the effect
- Does the effect change with missed doses or dose changes

# Overall stance on choosing not to adhere to treatment

- Acknowledge that medication is always a trade off between symptoms and side effects
- Acknowledge that almost everyone with a chronic illness chooses to stop taking medication sometimes
- Any medication change is an opportunity to learn more about the best way to manage their illness



# Best technique when patient insists on stopping

- Stop trying to dissuade them before you lose communication
- Urge stopping one at a time, not all at once
- Urge tapering not abrupt stop
- Make 3 cards listing early warning symptoms
- Write out "plan B"

# Don't overemphasize Dangers of Combining prescription medication with alcohol and drugs of abuse

- Most combinations are not dangerous except benzodiazapines
- Most clients have used while on medication without ill effects. They will conclude you are either a liar or a fool
- Most clients will stop prescription medication and continue to use alcohol and drugs of abuse
- If they are going to be intoxicated it's better not to be psychotic too

# Transition to topics other than psychiatric

Ask what supports or techniques they use to assist with emotions and behaviors when they choose not to take the medication.

# Basic Interview Approaches

- Principled Negotiation
- Motivation Enhancement

# General Approach

The approach when talking with clients about psychiatric medication is exactly the same as when talking about their substance abuse decisions.

Explore the triggers or cues that led to the undesired behavior (either taking drugs or abuse or not taking prescribed psychiatric medications).

Review why the undesired behavior seemed like a good idea at the time.

Review the actual outcome  
resulting from their choice.



Ask if their choice got them what they were seeking.

Strategize with clients what they could do differently in the future.

# Motivation Enhancement Principles

- Express empathy
- Develop discrepancy
- Avoid argumentation
- Roll with resistance
- Support self efficacy

# DON'T

- Argue, disagree, challenge
- Judge, criticize, blame
- Warn of negative consequences
- Interpret or analyze "reasons" for non-adherence
- Confront with authority

# DO

- Treat all client actions a legitimate attempt at problem solving
- Empathize with the problem
- Clarify if their action solved it

# NEGOTIATION

Adopted from "Getting to Yes"

By

Roger Fisher and William Ury

# Why Study Negotiation

- It's ubiquitous – daily it can involve  
spouses                      bosses                      third parties  
children                      patients                      colleagues
- It's unavoidable unless you are  
omnipotent or completely passive
- Like any skill, study and practice will  
improve your ability
- It's fun

# Common Methods of Negotiation

- Positional Bargaining
- Hard Negotiation
- Soft Negotiation



# Criteria for Judging Negotiation Methods

- Produces a wise agreement if possible
- Efficient
- Improves or at least doesn't damage the relationship between the parties

# A Wise Agreement

- Meets legitimate issues of each side to extent possible
- Resolves conflicting interests fairly
- Durable
- Takes community interest into account
- Is better than your BATNA

# The Problem with Taking a Position

- Locks you in
- Bad incentives – start extreme, be stubborn, many small concessions, stalling is productive
- Becomes a contest of wills

# Principled Negotiation

## The Method

1. Separate people from the problem
2. Focus on interests, no positions
3. Invent options for mutual gain
4. Insist on using objective criteria

# Separate the People from the Problem

## Principles

- When dealing with long term associates that the relationship is more important than the particular deal
- Substantive concessions don't solve people problems
- Be tough on the problem and soft on the people

# PERCEPTIONS

## Put yourself in their shoes

- Understand empathetically the power of their point of view
  - Understanding is not the same as agreeing
- Don't deduce their intentions from your fears
- Don't blame them for your problem
- As much as you honestly can – emphasize what they would like to hear
- Look for opportunities to act inconsistent of their perception
- Involve them in the process

# COMMUNICATION

- Listen actively – repeat their point of view
  - Understanding is not the same as agreeing
- Speak about yourself, not them

# EMOTION

- Recognize and understand it
- Explicitly discuss emotions
- Allow the other side to let off steam and don't react to emotional outbursts
- Use symbolic gestures



# Focus on Interests – Not positions

## Principles:

- Interests define the problem
- When you defend a position to the other party you commit yourself and lose flexibility
- Behind opposed and conflicting positions there are usually some shared interests

# METHOD

## Identify Interests

- Put yourself in their shoes
- Ask “why” and “why not” often
- Multiple interests always exists
- Consider Basic Needs:
  - Security – sense of belonging – economic well being
  - Recognition – sense of control over own life
- Make a list of interests of both sides
- Talk about your interests – always put interests and reasoning before proposal
- Acknowledge and talk about their interests
- Talk about the future, not the past

# Invent Options for Mutual Gain

## Four Obstacles to Inventing Options for Mutual Gain

1. Premature judgment
2. Searching for a single answer – broadening options is better than narrowing the gap between positions
3. Assumption of a fixed pie
4. Thinking that “solving their problem is their problem”, it’s your problem too if you want an agreement

# Method to Invent Options

Separate inventing from deciding –  
postpone all criticism and evaluation  
of ideas

## Brainstorming:

Define purpose

Choose participants

Change place of meeting

Go informal

Sit side by side

No criticism

Record all ideas in  
full view

Get a facilitator

# Broaden Options

Consider stronger and weaker agreements:

Substantive  
Permanent  
Final

Procedural  
Provisional  
In principle

Change the scope of agreement – fractionate  
or extend

# Use Objective Criteria

## Advantages:

- Often wiser

- Speeds process

- More efficient

- Reduces contest of wills

- Preserves relationship

# Method

1. Fair standards
  - Market value
  - Precedent
  - Expert opinion
  - Professional study
  - Efficiency
  - Cost
  - Tradition
2. Fair procedure
  - "one cuts – the other chooses"
  - Taking turns
  - Draw lots – flip coin
  - Arbitration – last best offer
3. Negotiate objective criteria
  - Ask why that criteria, how did they decide
  - Be open to reason – discuss multiple criteria
  - Never yield to pressure, only principle

# If the Other Side is More Powerful

Principle      Know your BATNA  
Best Alternative To a Negotiated  
Agreement

- Protects you from accepting an agreement you should reject
- Protects you from rejecting terms that are in your interest
- The better your BATNA the more power you have in negotiation
- The better you know the other side's BATNA the more power you have in negotiation



# If the Other Side Won't Play Fair

## Principles

- Avoid reaction, don't push back
- Use questions, not statements

### If They

### Don't You

### Do

Assert their position

Reject it

Ask why it's a good solution  
for them

Attack your ideas

Defend your ideas

Ask for criticism and advice

Attack you

Counter attack them

Reframe it as an attack on  
the problem

OR – Use the all-purpose alternative response: remain silent!